



Protecting Land Forever

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2015

JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015



Maryland Environmental Trust
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FY2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Environmental Trust 2015 Annual Report is prepared and submitted to the Governor and General Assembly of Maryland, pursuant to the requirements of the Natural Resources Article, §3-203.10.

Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1967 as a charitable organization with state support and funding, and with an independent Board of Trustees. In 1969, MET was assigned to the Department of Natural Resources for organizational purposes.

For more than four decades MET has worked with the citizens of Maryland and partner organizations to foster the appreciation and conservation of scenic open space, natural areas, and working farmlands across the state. With one of the largest portfolios of preservation and conservation easements in the nation, MET is a leader in its field. MET is responsible for perpetually stewarding these properties, some of Maryland's most iconic and culturally significant landscapes and properties.

Our Mission:

Maryland Environmental Trust works with landowners, local communities, and citizen land trusts to protect Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources as a legacy for future generations. We accomplish this work by providing direct assistance, information and innovative tools to ensure the ongoing stewardship and public concern for the natural, historic, and scenic resources of the state.

As one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the country, The Maryland Environmental Trust holds over 1,070 conservation easements preserving over 130,000 acres statewide.

From the Chesapeake Bay to the mountains of Garrett County, our Land Conservation, Monitoring and Stewardship, and Land Trust Assistance Programs promote the protection of open land.

MET's Creation

In 1967 MET (then referred to as "the Trust") was established "to conserve, improve, stimulate, and perpetuate the aesthetic, natural, health and welfare, scenic, and cultural qualities of the environment, including, but not limited to land, water, air, wildlife, scenic qualities, open spaces, buildings or any interest therein, and other appurtenances pertaining in any way to the state. Through educational and other means, the Trust shall encourage and motivate the populace of the state and others to do so and shall promote continuing interest in and the study of these matters. The purpose of the Trust is of general benefit to the citizens of the state, and it is charitable in nature."

MET's establishment, powers, and responsibilities are codified in Natural Resources Article § 3-201. MET has characteristics both of a unit of the Department of Natural Resources and an independent land conservation organization, and serves as the only statewide land trust. The statute clarifies MET's duties and directs it to:

- (1) Receive annual appropriations;**
- (2) Sponsor research and education programs pertaining to scenic or cultural qualities of the state, including the provision of financial grants to public and private agencies assisting MET;**
- (3) Acquire and hold real and personal property of scenic or cultural importance to conserve it;**
- (4) Accept gifts, and apply their value to the general purposes of the Trust;**
- (6) Assist other units of the state and public or federal agencies and**

foundations in furtherance of MET's mission; and

- (7) Report annually to the Governor and to the General Assembly on MET's activities during the preceding year and provide recommendations or requests to further the purposes of MET.**

While MET holds fee title in several properties, the vast majority of its property interests are in the form of conservation easements donated by landowners (and, in some cases, purchased using various sources of funding). Generally speaking, a conservation easement may be defined as a legally binding, recorded agreement between a landowner and MET which serves to restrict future development activities on the land and thereby to protect it.

Governance

MET is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees. The Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Delegates, or their designees, are ex officio members of the Board. The remaining 12 trustees are elected by the Board for a term of four years. In addition, the Board can appoint up to 12 area representatives to assist in carrying out the powers and duties of MET.

Staffing

In addition to the Director, who is selected by the Board, the staff includes a Conservation Easement Program Manager, a Stewardship Program Manager, a Land Trust Assistance Coordinator, a Volunteer Coordinator, two regional Natural Resources Planners, and administrative support staff including seasonal and long term contractual employees and consultants. MET also relies on a growing corps of trained volunteers to assist with the regular monitoring of 1,070 easement properties held by the organization. MET

operates in an office currently located in the state-owned People's Resource Center in Crownsville. At the conclusion of FY 2015, MET staffing was approximately 11 positions including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff.



MET Staff

Focus Areas

MET has four key focus areas for its programs and initiatives:

- (1) To provide strong leadership in the negotiation, acquisition, and recordation of new conservation easements and to hold such easements in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Maryland;**
- (2) To serve as a responsible steward of land already protected by such easements;**
- (3) To provide training, technical assistance, and support to non-profit land trusts, private landowners, and other partner organizations in the state; and**
- (4) To educate and provide direct assistance to landowners, local land trusts and other community groups, including the administration of the Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB)**

program that provides annual grants to schools and nonprofits for environmental and educational projects.

Partnerships with other local, state, and federal government agencies, local and regional land trusts, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector are critical to the ongoing success of MET. Among state agencies, a particularly close working relationship is maintained with units of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Planning, the Maryland Historical Trust, and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. MET works with over 50 land trust and conservation organizations, including The Chesapeake Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and the Civil War Trust. MET is an active member of the Land Trust Alliance, the national association for land trusts.

Funding

MET receives its operating capital from several sources. In fiscal year 2015, \$823,318 of state funds was appropriated to MET. This included \$586,078 in general funds and \$237,239 in special grant funds (State Highways Administration, and Coastal Zone Management and Program Open Space [POS] administrative fees through the Department of Natural Resources). In addition, MET received private donations from foundations and individual donors totaling \$58,615. The summary of MET's Financial Statement of Activities for Fiscal Year 2015 is included in the Appendices of this report.

Conservation Easements and Their Stewardship

Conservation easements - their negotiation, acquisition, recordation, and stewardship - is

a central part of MET's work. Easements that are donated by private landowners are the primary mechanism by which MET works to accomplish its mission of preserving open space throughout the state of Maryland. These landowner stewards play a major part in ensuring the long term health of Maryland's natural, historic, economic, and cultural resources.

MET currently holds more than 1,070 conservation easements, covering over 132,000 acres. Conservation easements are crafted to ensure that important scenic open space, including targeted ecological areas, wildlife habitat, working farms, forests and heritage areas – are maintained forever. They are an important component of the State's broader public policy goals of ensuring the health and well-being of all Maryland citizens and the lands and waters we depend on. The importance of the Maryland State Income Tax Credit Program (a valuable incentive for land conservation) and the charitable contribution deduction for donation of perpetual conservation easements allowable under the federal Internal Revenue Service Code are key contributors to fostering gifts of conservation easements to MET and other land trusts. They help to allow for a cost effective approach to land conservation by supporting private citizen stewards across the State.

Conveyance and Perpetual Stewardship of a Conservation Easement

MET staff members work with landowners and community based land trusts to assist and guide them through the process of conveying a conservation easement. The process, which may take from a few months to more than a year for completion, typically includes the following: landowner consideration of easement donation, site visit to the subject property by MET staff,

research regarding subject property by MET, draft of conservation easement by MET, action (acceptance, acceptance subject to changes, or rejection) by MET Board of Trustees regarding proposed easement, follow-up site visit to the property by MET staff, preparation of baseline documentation report regarding the property by MET staff, ratification/approval by the Board of Public Works (in most situations), final preparation of deed of easement and execution by landowner and Director of MET, and recordation of deed of easement.

After the deed of easement is recorded, the long term work for MET begins. The "forever" deed restriction imposed with the gift and legal recordation of a conservation easement carries with it the responsibility of stewardship and public trust. Accordingly, the success of MET in negotiating and recording over 1,070 easements has brought with it increased responsibilities relating to easement stewardship. As more and more easements are recorded, requisite stewardship of those easements will increase accordingly.

The stewardship process - critical to the integrity of any easement program - consists of a range of activities essential to protecting land on which easements are donated in perpetuity. Key components of the MET stewardship program include: landowner support, education, and assistance relating to such issues as land management practices and interpretation of specific easement provisions (regarding, for example, property subdivision or amendment to deed of easement); documentation and records management (to ensure, for instance, accurate details of ownership, boundaries, and structures for easements held); regular site visits to property under easement; and upholding the public trust to ensure correction of easement violations, preferably

through voluntary action by the landowner but, where necessary, with counsel from the Office of the Attorney General.



Every year, MET seeks ways to strengthen and enhance our stewardship partners and networks. In Fiscal Year 2015, we updated a number of our existing partnership agreements, and signed up one new cooperative agreement, with the aim of strengthening community conservation efforts across the state.

Moving forward, we will continue efforts to ensure MET remains a durable and effective organization by strengthening our practices around the legal and financial requirements for long term stewardship. Most importantly, MET is working diligently to enhance working relationships and focus on the provision of technical support, education, and assistance to those through whom the success of its mission is ultimately made possible: the landowners who so graciously have donated conservation easements on their properties.

Conservation Easements Acquisition and Stewardship: Notable Accomplishments

Fiscal year 2015 was another successful year for MET in advancing its mission of acquiring, recording, and stewarding conservation easements: 763 acres were

protected on 11 easements, and 25 properties received stewardship visits. Other notable highlights:

- Held a successful statewide two day conference at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum for the land trust community with over 150 attending.
- Held Inaugural Fête at Sagamore Farm on November 1, 97 guests registered. Sponsorship and ticket sales generated almost \$30,000.
- Mailed annual appeal to over 2,000 constituents.
- Awarded \$27,000 in Janice Hollmann Grants to six local land trusts to strengthen their conservation, outreach and stewardship programs.
- Distributed \$9,600 in *Keep Maryland Beautiful* Grants.
- Developed criteria for a Stewardship Award to be presented to landowners for exemplary on-the-ground activities promoting best management practices and enhancement of conservation values.
- Wrote and distributed two issues of LandMarks newsletters to over 2,000 constituents.
- MET litigated a case against an easement landowner who timbered trees without permission. The case gained national attention in blogs and in Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Defense Network newsletter, and the California Coalition of Land Trusts invited MET's Assistant Attorney General to speak about it.

Lands Owned by MET

While the MET mission is accomplished largely through its conservation easements program, MET also has acquired land in various regions of the state. MET currently owns approximately 111 acres of land, acquired primarily through gifts from individuals.

Keep Maryland Beautiful

The functions and activities of the Governor’s Committee to Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) were transferred to MET in 1967. Since that time MET has awarded KMB grants annually and further developed the program to include the Bill James Environmental Grants and the Margaret Rosch Jones for projects that focus on environmental education. The funding for these awards has been made possible through the support of SHA.

Accreditation

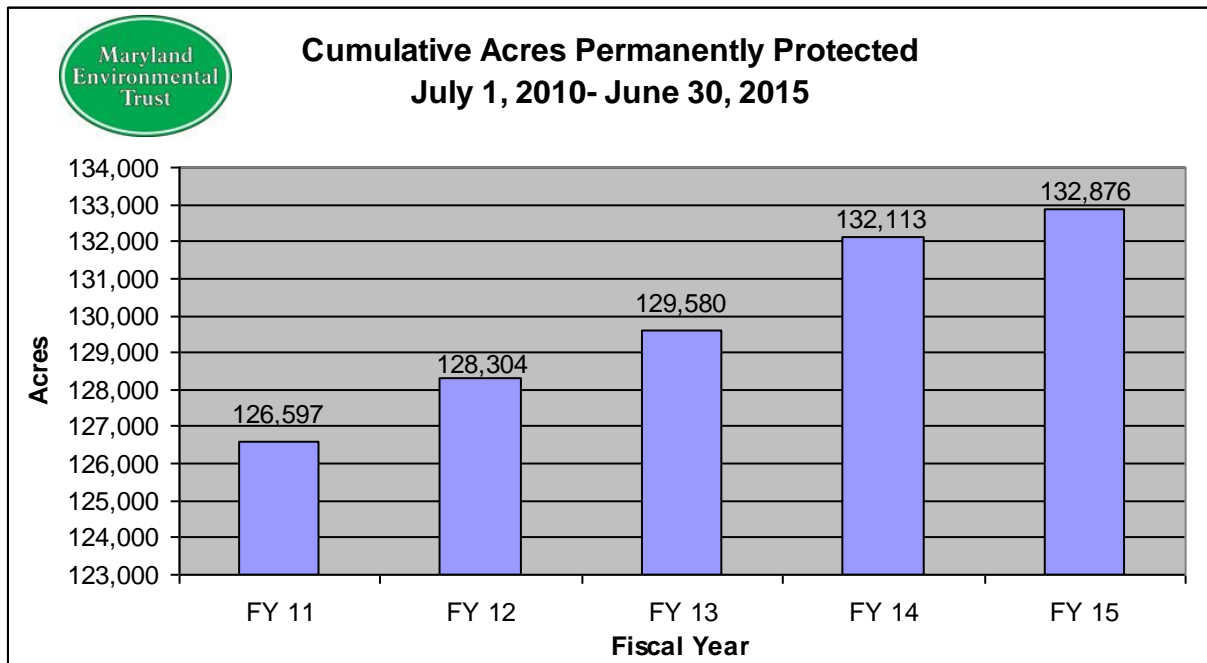
The land trust movement in the United States has grown rapidly over the years and has become more professional, thanks in large part to the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). The LTA has promulgated *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and provided funding to MET and other land trusts in Maryland to advance these practices and support strategic planning. The LTA has also sponsored the Land Trust Alliance

Commission, an independent program of the LTA to verify a land trust’s ability “*to operate in an ethical, legal and technically sound manner and ensure the long-term protection of land in the public interest.*”

MET began preparations for LTA accreditation and has completed an *Accreditation Work Plan*, which was completed in 2014. An *Accreditation Working Group* has been formed and is guiding staff in the process of seeking eventual national accreditation of MET.

Conclusion

For MET, 2015 was a year of great achievement despite the uncertain future of the federal enhanced income tax incentives for donations of easements. Ever mindful of the outstanding contributions of its many donors, partners and volunteers, MET expresses sincere appreciation to all who have so generously given of their time, talents, and resources to foster open space land conservation throughout Maryland.



CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

From the forested mountain tops of Garrett County to the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland boasts an ecological diversity and scenic beauty rivaled by few states in the nation. MET works with private property owners to permanently protect these valuable natural resources with conservation easements. A conservation easement is a legal agreement entered into voluntarily by a landowner and a government entity or land trust that permanently limits the uses of the land in order to protect its scenic, agricultural, woodland, wetland or habitat conservation values. An easement allows landowners to continue to own, use, and manage their property, and sell it or pass it on to their heirs. Conservation easements offer great flexibility and are tailored to fit a landowner's vision and goals for the property. The donation of a conservation easement is a reflection of a landowner's commitment to conserving scenic vistas and water quality for public benefit, ensuring the future viability of farming and forestry, and preserving the rural character and natural beauty of communities all across Maryland.

OVERVIEW

In the 2015 fiscal year (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015) MET had three Regional Conservation Easement Planners soliciting, negotiating and completing conservation easements. This year MET protected a total of 763.22 acres on 11 properties statewide.

WESTERN-CENTRAL REGION (Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Garrett, Frederick, Harford, Washington Counties and Baltimore City)

A total of 390 acres were permanently protected in the western and central region. Five easements were recorded in Frederick and Baltimore Counties. One amendment which added acreage was recorded in Baltimore County. A total of 123 acres of Targeted Ecological Areas, 193 acres of Targeted Agricultural Areas, 1.6 miles of scenic road and stream frontage, 140 acres of prime farmland as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and 208 acres of forest were protected through the easements in the region.

Shannon and Susanne Bohrer donated a 26.77 acre easement to protect their farm in Frederick County which is entirely within both a Targeted Ecological Area and Targeted Agricultural Area. The easement protects the scenic views along Sixes Road and Tom's Creek.

Approximately a quarter of the property is within an Ecologically Significant Area as defined by the DNR. The easement also protects 700 feet of stream buffers. The Bohrer property is adjacent to a block of 14 easements preserving 1,467 acres.



Susanne and Shannon Bohrer protect their farmland and scenic view in Frederick County. Also in Frederick County, MET accepted an easement from the Civil

War Preservation Trust on a historically important 42 acre property which is located within the Fox's Gap section of the South Mountain Battlefield. The easement protects the historically important land area, including the view of the property along Reno Monument Road. Frederick County co-holds this easement with MET.

In Baltimore County, MET partnered with The Manor Conservancy to accept a 166 acre easement owned by Cunningham Farms, LLC along Stockton and Cooper Roads near Phoenix. The easement protects productive agricultural land and forest habitat. The view from Stockton and Cooper Roads captures the property's rolling agricultural fields, forested stream valley and the border of its forested area. The property is part of a larger conservation area which includes several thousand acres of protected lands in the immediate vicinity of the property.

Michael and Jennifer Krueger amended an existing easement in Baltimore County to protect additional acreage and strengthen the forest protections on the entire property by requiring a Forest Stewardship Plan. The additional acreage includes forested land along Trenton Road.

Also in Baltimore County, MET partnered with Land Preservation Trust, Inc., to accept two conservation easements donated by Ivy Hill Properties, LLC on 153 acres along Ivy Hill Road and the Beaverdam Run stream near Oregon Ridge Park. The contiguous easements protect the pastoral scenic view from Ivy Hill Road and productive agricultural land and forest habitat, as well as over a mile of

the Beaverdam Run, which meanders through the forest on the property.



Beaverdam Run meandering through protected Ivy Hill Properties, LLC easement.

SOUTHERN REGION (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties)

MET did not record any easements in the Southern Region during FY 2015. This was due primarily to staff turnover. MET hired a new Conservation Easement Program Manager/Southern Region easement planner at the beginning of FY 2015, but also lost one part-time easement planner who worked mainly in the Southern Region. Additionally, the new Program Manager assumed the role of MET's Acting Director for most of the second half of FY 2015, thus limiting work on easement projects. However, MET maintained a significant pipeline of pending easement projects in the Southern Region and is anticipating more robust protected acreage totals in FY 2016.

EASTERN REGION (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties)

A total of 373 acres were permanently protected in the eastern region in FY2015. Of the five properties protected, two are in Cecil County, one is located in Somerset County, one in Worcester County, and one in Talbot County. All of the easements are co-held with land trust partners. A total of 44 acres of prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and 223 acres of forest were protected through easements in the eastern region.

In Somerset County, to protect additional acreage, MET recorded an Amendment to a Deed of Conservation Easement donated by James E. Myers, Richard W. Myers, and James E. Daniell to MET and Lower Shore Land Trust, Inc. The new acreage consists of 12.5375 acres of woodlands.

Grande View Properties, LLC donated a perpetual conservation easement to the MET and Lower Shore Land Trust, Inc., on its 168.082 acre property in Worcester County. The property consists of 85 acres of agricultural land; 50 acres of woodlands; 22 acres of wetlands, including six acres of identified Wetlands of Special State Concern; three acres of ponds; a portion of the Paw Paw Creek, a tributary of Chincoteague Bay; and scenic value of significant public benefit along Public Landing Road, which is part of Maryland's Blue Crab Scenic Byway. The area designated Wetland of Special State Concern is known to support occurrences of the Dwarf Trillium (*Trillium pusillum* var. *virginianum*) and Single-headed Pussetoes (*Antennaria solitaria*), both

state-listed threatened plant species. Approximately 80.5 acres of the property are prime farmland, an additional 16.8 acres is prime farmland if irrigated and 42.4 acres are farmland of statewide importance (Natural Resource Conservation Service, Worcester County Soil Survey, Version 7, February 2007). There are 616 acres of protected land adjacent to the Property.



168 acres permanently protected in Worcester County.

Kilbys, Inc., donated a perpetual conservation easement to the MET and Cecil Land Trust, Inc., on its 44.472 acre property in Cecil County. The Property consists of 27 acres of agricultural land and 17 acres of woodlands; portions of two unnamed tributaries of Basin Run; and scenic value of significant public benefit along Firetower Road. A five acre portion of property near Firetower Road falls within a Targeted Ecological Area. Approximately 27 acres of the property are prime farmland. It is adjacent to a 260 acre Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation conservation easement.

The Estate of Elizabeth F. Obenshain donated a perpetual conservation easement to the MET and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Inc., (ESLC) on its

94.073 acre property in Cecil County. The property consists of 90 acres of woodlands; approximately 4 acres of scrub shrub meadow; a portion of the Herring Creek; relatively natural habitat for forest interior dwelling bird species; and scenic value of significant public benefit along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. The property was formerly pastured and has been allowed to succeed into woodlands for the past few decades. No structures exist on the property. The property is immediately adjacent to a 4,138 acre block of farmland protected by conservation easements held by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

Fifty-three acres of forest in Talbot County, home of the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*), are permanently protected from development, thanks to the MET and the ESLC in partnership with the Talbot Preservation Alliance. REMCO Properties, LLC, the landowner, ensured the protection of this forest for wildlife. The property consists of mature mixed pine and hardwood forest with an open understory. It is located adjacent to Waterside Village shopping center and was originally part of the parcel that was developed into the shopping center. Forest interior dwelling bird species also make their home in this block of forests, but their populations are dwindling. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classified this property as having high conservation value because of its status as a habitat for the Delmarva fox squirrel.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The donation of a conservation easement to MET is a major investment in the continued health, beauty, and enjoyment of Maryland's open spaces and the Chesapeake Bay. Protecting one's property does not stop with the signing of the conservation easement. MET and cooperating local land trust staff and volunteers continue to look after the land on an ongoing basis through regular monitoring of conservation properties. Stewardship involves a larger set of issues, which can include addressing landowner questions or concerns or requests for MET to approve various proposed structures or activities on the property. MET works with local land trusts in the Land Trust Assistance Program to ensure that stewardship and monitoring procedures comply with or exceed national guidelines.

In FY2015 MET and its cooperators together conducted monitoring visits to 425 easement and fee properties owned by 501 landowners covering 51,134 acres, which represents 40% of the Trust's easement portfolio. Monitoring visits are conducted in order to document current conditions and assess compliance with easement requirements. This was a 7% decrease over FY2014 monitoring accomplishments, caused by factors including the departure of MET's Volunteer Coordinator, as well as continued shortfalls in funding for stewardship and monitoring activities experienced by many local land trust partners. As part of its Land Trust Assistance Program, MET staff assists land trusts with the training of volunteers, the inspection of co-held easement properties, enforcing easement

terms, and the implementation of recordkeeping and documentation protocols. This year MET staff assisted land trusts with the monitoring of 69 properties (76 landowners) which was a 92% increase over FY2014 accomplishments, attributable to the hiring of a second seasonal employee and greater efforts at coordinating joint monitoring. Local land trusts reported an additional 58 properties (70 landowners) monitored on their own, which staff recognizes is an undercount of actual accomplishments. (MET coholds 55% of its easement portfolio (590 easements) with local land trusts, of which approximately a dozen land trusts are actively monitoring and are responsible for approximately 300 easements.) In a 2014 survey of local land trusts by MET's Land Trust Assistance Program, a significant number expressed a desire

for a more streamlined, digital method of collecting and reporting monitoring information to MET and the DNR. Staff believes such a system would increase monitoring and reporting, and thus, MET continues to research opportunities and funding for such technology.

In addition to performing monitoring visits, staff reviewed and processed 254 reports submitted by local land trusts and volunteers for completeness and accuracy, reviewed over 3,000 photographs, entered each report into the MET database, and copied reports and photographs into paper and digital folios. This was accomplished by one full time contractual and two seasonal employees, who were also managing 43 volunteers and monitoring 156 easements, respectively.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Volunteer Program continues to be a valued component of the Stewardship Program, supported entirely by donated funds. MET relies on approximately 40 trained volunteers to help monitor its easement properties and assist the staff as the inventory of protected lands grows.

At the end of its twelfth year, the Volunteer Program provided much needed supplements to efforts of paid staff in “feet on the ground” inspections and documented reports on the current land uses of the easement properties. This year 43 trained volunteers monitored 145 easements on over 15,245 acres throughout the state.

In the office, five volunteers devoted more than 224 hours on a variety of projects. In total MET Volunteers contributed 552 hours to MET’s Volunteer Program, a value equal to \$12,735.

Staff presented three training sessions on monitoring at which nine new recruits were trained as Land Steward Volunteers. Attendees were provided training on the theory, objectives, and procedures of monitoring, and then led outside to conduct an on-the-ground monitoring inspection. Volunteers were then honored at an annual Volunteer Appreciation event held at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, with a catered lunch and kayak tour.

2015 Volunteers

Ronnie Adams
Shannon Allen
Lauren Atwood
Derek Baumgardner
Andrea Blohm
Jason Boothe
Andrew Brignole
Ken Brown
Ann Burchard
Christine Cadigan
Susan Cohen
Pat Curran
Carrie Dike
Jeffrey & Sharon Dillon
Eric Dircksen
Sondra & Steve Dorsey
Christina Dzingala
Stephen Fogle
Vivienne & Kevin Gautrey
David Godfrey
Christine Hammer
Pamela Hargest
Joseph Hasuly
David Hobson
Carol & Peter Holland
David & Nancy Kieffer
Emily Kimak
Toby Lloyd
Brittan McBride
Christine McCreary
Cassandra Melton
Andrew Mowbray
S. Patrick Pence
Ben Peterson
Elizabeth & Werner
Schumann
Kevin Smith
Stuart Stainman
Melissa Tully
Charles Wells
Lynn Wilkinson
Joseph Yates



MET staff and volunteers at a volunteer training.

LAND TRUST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MET serves as the statewide land trust. Local land trusts of which there are over fifty in Maryland, work with and are assisted by MET. The Land Trust Assistance Program supports the work of these land trusts. The Land Trust Assistance Program helps build and sustain the quality and effectiveness of the state's land trusts, and encourages participation in a number of national programs, such as the LTA's *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Local land trusts are not-for-profit corporations designed to protect land within their geographical area from development, using conservation easements, gifts or purchases of land, limited development, conservation buyers, or promotion of existing local, state, or federal easement programs. These land conservation organizations range from small groups operated solely by volunteers to large land trusts with multiple professional staff. A directory of Maryland land trusts can be found on the MET website. (See list on p. 24).

The Land Trust Assistance Program provides land trusts with:

- Technical Assistance - information and training, including webinars and the annual Maryland Land Conservation Conference
- Financial support - through the Land Trust Grant Fund, the Janice Hollmann Grant and the Aileen Hughes Award
- Targeting of Conservation Easements - information on state land conservation priorities
- Organizational support - to ensure adoption of Land Trust Standards and Practices
- Conservation Easements and Land Conservation - taking a lead in drafting new easements and easement amendments
- Cooperative Agreements – to strengthen collaboration and foster innovative approaches to conservation

MET adopted a new model Cooperative Agreement in 2011. This agreement establishes roles for MET and land trust partners and outlines principles in land conservation. A signed cooperative agreement is required for land trusts to receive MET grants and potential state tax benefits for owners of properties with easements.

In FY2015, MET signed cooperative agreements with the following local and regional land trusts:

Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.
Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc.

MARYLAND LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

MET held its annual statewide Land Conservation Conference on April 30 – May 1, 2015 at The Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum Heights, MD. More than 160 representatives from over 90 organizations from across the Chesapeake Bay region were present at the conference. Stephanie Meeks, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provided the keynote address. Ms. Meeks spoke on the importance of the land conservation and historic preservation communities working together to conserve important open spaces and historic places that transform our communities and landscapes from places where we live into places that we love.

Conference participants gathered for a unique opportunity to share their experience, learn about priority issues and exchange new ideas on land conservation in our region. Session topics included: *historical and cultural resources; fundraising; urban and community conservation; outreach and innovative partnerships; emerging issues and the conservation of large landscapes and working lands.*

The Maryland Land Conservation Conference, the only statewide gathering of land conservationists and trusts of its kind in Maryland, was made possible by the generous support from the following sponsors: *the Abell Foundation; American Forest Foundation; Chesapeake Conservancy and National Parks Service - Chesapeake Bay Office; Civil War Trust; Ecotone, Inc.; Humane*

Society Wildlife Land Trust; Insight Management Consulting; Land Trust Alliance; Maryland Historical Trust; O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP; S. H. Muller & Associates, LLC; The Conservation Fund; The Trust for Public Land; Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP.



MET Chairman, James Constable, welcomes attendees to the 2015 Maryland Land Conservation Conference.



Stephanie Meeks, President and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, delivers the keynote address.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

MET presented a number of grants and awards at the Maryland Land Conservation Conference.

DILLON AWARD

Alverta and Louise Dillon, sisters and retired school teachers, donated a perpetual conservation easement and bequeathed their entire Garrett County property to MET in 1984.

Alverta and Louise were dedicated naturalists and were enthusiastic about conservation and enhancement of the many resources found on their land. Their generous bequest is maintained as an endowment to support the activities and mission of MET, in accordance with the terms of the gifts. The Dillon Award is made annually by MET to a landowner(s) who exhibits outstanding conservation and/or environmental efforts.

Estate of Elizabeth F. Obenshain was selected to receive the 2015 Dillon Award for her commitment to land conservation in Maryland. In 2014, the Estate of Elizabeth F. Obenshain donated a 94.073 acre easement to MET and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, forever protecting woodland along Herring Creek and a scenic byway in Cecil County. The property consists of 90 acres of woodlands; approximately four acres of scrub shrub meadow; a portion of the Herring Creek; relatively natural habitat for forest interior dwelling bird species; and scenic value of significant public benefit along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway (MD Route 213). The property is immediately adjacent to a 4,138-acre block of farmland protected by conservation easements held by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

Mrs. Obenshain noted in her will that this land should be protected. Her estate fulfilled her desire by donating the conservation easement.

AILEEN HUGHES AWARD

MET presents the Aileen Hughes Award annually to honor the late Aileen Hughes, a true leader in the conservation movement. Aileen was a supporter of women's and civil rights, as well as the protection of our state's natural and cultural resources. Aileen Hughes was the president of the American Chestnut Land Trust for many years.

The Aileen Hughes Award is given to recipients for their leadership roles in the land trust community. The award is given to an individual representing a Maryland land trust for leadership, partnership and innovation in a conservation project. The award is presented as a cash sum to the organization represented by the individual and is funded by non-state funds from MET.

This year the recipient of the Aileen Hughes Award was presented to Barbara Hopkins, Executive Director of NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, Inc., for outstanding leadership and creative thinking in developing a vision for open space within Baltimore County's Urban Rural Demarcation Line.



Connie Lieder, MET Grant Committee Chair, presents the Hughes Award to Eric Rockel, who is accepting on behalf of Barbara Hopkins, Executive Director of NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, Inc.

JANICE HOLLMANN GRANT PROGRAM

The Janice Hollmann Grant Program is part of the Land Trust Assistance Program provided by MET to support land trusts throughout Maryland. The grants are named for a woman who exemplified citizen leadership of local land trusts in Maryland. Janice Hollmann co-founded the Severn River Land Trust and the Arundel Conservation Trust, and served on the Severn River Commission. She was named the Izaak Walton League’s Conservationist of the Year in 1989 and the Capital newspaper’s Person of the Year for 1990. Janice died in April 1990. MET’s tribute to Janice Hollman is this annual grant made in her honor for those local land trusts continuing in her footsteps.

These grants are generally targeted towards land trusts that demonstrate easement solicitation skills and that operate in regions of significant land conservation potential. The purpose of the Janice Hollmann program is to build the capabilities of the local organizations through small matching grants, with a particular focus on start-up assistance for new land trusts and fostering collaborations among neighboring organizations.

The Hollmann grant program supported six organizations. The grants helped fund a variety of eligible costs, including staff positions, technical consulting services, landowner outreach programs, office supplies, stewardship programs, insurance and volunteer trainings. Funding for the Janice Hollmann Grants is provided by the SHA.



Sandy Hertz, Deputy Director of SHA’s Office of Environmental Design and Michelle Grafton, MET Land Trust Coordinator present the Hollmann Grants to the 2015 recipients. Michelle Grafton; Charlie Conklin, Gunpowder Valley Conservancy; Miriam Avins, Baltimore Green Space; Hal Delaplaine, Conservancy for Charles County; Richard Post, Harford Land Trust; Victoria Bauer, Lower Shore Land Trust; Sarah Knebel, Scenic Rivers Land Trust; and Sandy Hertz.

Recipients of the Janice Hollmann Grants

Organization	Amount
Baltimore Green Space	\$2,522.00
Conservancy for Charles County	\$5,000.00
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy	\$5,000.00
Harford Land Trust	\$5,000.00
Lower Shore Land Trust	\$2,000.00
Scenic Rivers Land Trust	\$4,478.00
Total	\$27,000.00

LAND TRUST GRANT FUND

The Land Trust Grant Fund was created by the Maryland Legislature in 1990 with a primary purpose to provide interest-free loans to help local land trusts purchase conservation lands and easements.

Administration of the Fund was assigned by statute to the Maryland Environmental Trust. (§ 3-2A-02 (c)). Over the years MET has managed the fund so as to aid various land conservation projects throughout the state. These projects permanently protected 2,000 acres (as of June 30, 2011) through purchased and donated easements to MET and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

The loans made through the Fund have been highly leveraged. The Fund provides on average only one fifth of the project purchase price, the balance coming from local community and other private fund sources. In total, \$2.7 million dollars have been loaned from the Fund to land trusts, with an additional \$9.4 million coming from conservation partners. For the reasons explained below, no expenditures or reimbursements were made during FY11 through FY15; all outstanding loans had been repaid prior to the start of this fiscal year.

Administration of the Land Trust Grant Fund

The original monies for the Fund came to MET by General Assembly appropriations in the early 1990's through Program Open Space (POS) funding. The Fund is part of MET's annual budget (Object 14, Item 33). The basic Fund is held in the Fund's Reserve Account, and is a no-year budget item; appropriations for new projects are

Active Account. The Fund Reserve Account is interest bearing, the Active Account is not. Repayments are initially made to the Active Account. The Fund is flexible in that monies, such as repayments, can be transferred at the end of the fiscal year from the Active to the Reserve Account, and thus do not lapse.

Loans are given out and repaid in accordance with Land Trust Grant Fund Agreements that are completed for each project. The statute provides that loans can be made to a Maryland land trust for preservation and protection of open space and natural areas. The statute further provides that MET may make the grants reimbursable to the Fund, and may require the dedication of a conservation easement on the property. (Md. Code. Ann., Nat. Res. §3-2A-01.)

As of FY 2009 the Fund had a balance of \$1,500,000 in the Reserve Account, and approximately \$253,000 in the Active Account. However, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2010 (SB 141/ HB 151) provided that, on or before June 30, 2010, the Governor may transfer to the General Fund \$1,500,000 of the funds in the Land Trust Grant Fund established under Section 3-2A-02 of the Natural Resources Article. That was done - \$1.5 million dollars of the Fund was diverted to the state budget, leaving a balance of less than \$16,831 to assist land trusts.

The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2010 further provided that for FY15 net interest from special funds shall accrue to the General Fund of the state, and not to the Fund itself. The Special Fund Statement attached does not show interest accrued for FY15 due to this provision.

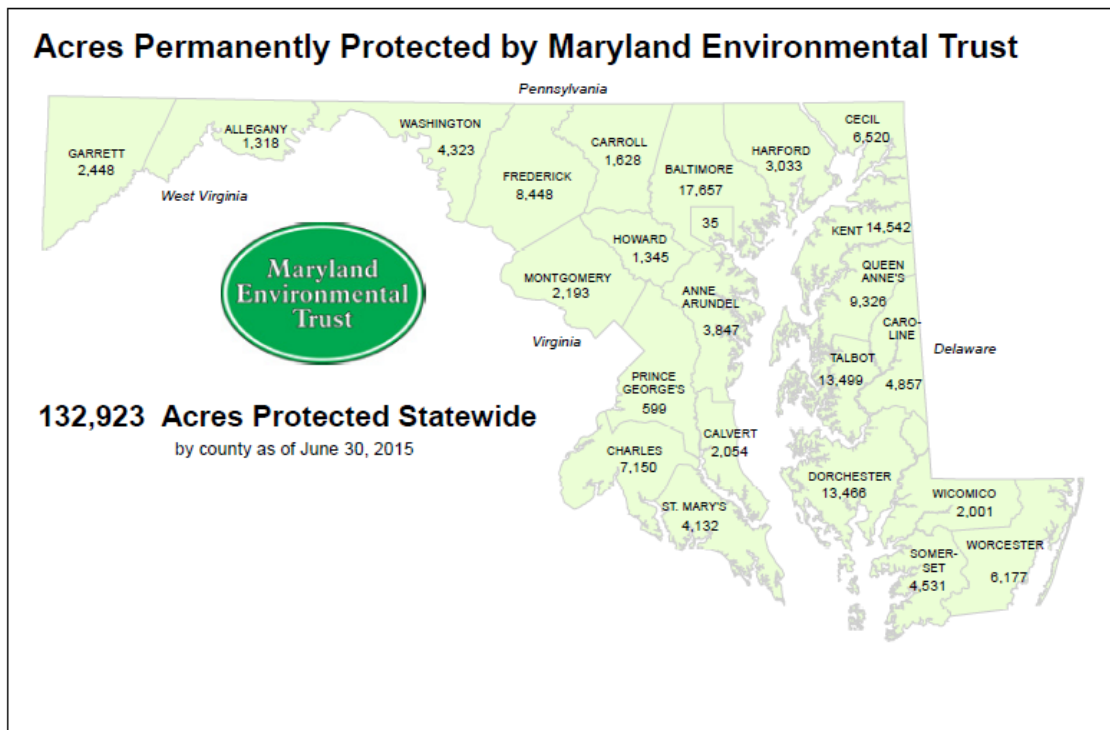
Recommendations

MET's ability to assist its partners and provide a rapid response to protect significant open space and natural resources has been drastically diminished; as of June 30, 2015, the Fund had a balance of \$16,831 available. Furthermore that balance is rapidly diminishing without any replenishment, since a portion of the remaining fund balance is allocated to MET annually through the state budgeting process, to support costs of monitoring and other related administration costs.

The MET Board feels strongly that the Fund should be replenished so that it may continue to serve as a critical source of financing to land trusts in their efforts to protect open space. The Fund has worked effectively as a rapid response land preservation tool. In the past the Fund was available for grants and loans to land trusts

at no interest for use when valuable resource lands are threatened by development. No other state program is that flexible and available at such short notice. The readjustment of land prices may spur demand for loan funds as public/private partnerships emerge to address local land use issues with voluntary conservation measures. The accrual of interest earned to the General Fund of the state further diminishes future funding for land conservation projects.

The Board of Trustees of MET recommends that the Fund be restored to its original levels and maintained and increased as soon as fiscally possible, and that the Governor and General Assembly thus support the program's goals, to assist Maryland's land trusts in their efforts to preserve open space and the state's natural areas.



KEEP MARYLAND BEAUTIFUL

The Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) program was the first program administered by MET. This program is funded by the SHA and MET, and provides two sets of grants and awards to non-profit organizations and schools to support environmental education and demonstration projects that enhance and maintain the environment.

The Margaret Rosch Jones Award of up to \$2,000 is awarded to one or more non-profit groups or communities for an ongoing project or activity that has demonstrated success in solving an environmental issue, whether local or statewide. This award recognizes those organizations that have been actively educating people in their community about litter prevention, community beautification, or eliminating or reducing the causes of a local environmental problem.

This year the recipients of the Margaret Rosch Jones Award are:

Organization	Amount
Chesapeake Beach Oyster Cultivation Society	\$1,000.00
Girl Scout Troop 110	\$300.00
It's All About The Kids Education Organization, Inc.	\$500.00
Land & Cultural Preservation Fund, Inc	\$600.00
Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council	\$600.00
Youghiogheny River Watershed Association	\$600.00
Total	\$3,600.00

The Bill James Environmental Grant of up to \$1,000 is awarded to school groups, science and ecology clubs, and other nonprofit youth groups for proposed environmental education projects.

This year the Bill James Grants were awarded to:

Organization	Amount
Annapolis High School Environmental Club	\$650.00
Christ Church Kent Island	\$1,000.00
Friends of Tuckahoe & Martinak State Parks	\$600.00
George Washington Carver Elem. School	\$250.00
Mattaponi Elementary	\$600.00
NASA Goddard Child Development Center	\$600.00
North County High School Greenhouse Club	\$600.00
Southwest Baltimore Charter School	\$600.00
SustainaFest	\$500.00
UMCP Gemstone Team CATTAILS	\$600.00
Total	\$ 6,000.00



KMB Recipient Youghiogheny River Watershed Association with Northern Garrett High School students and the MD DNR assess Maryland's Brook Trout population.



Maryland's native trout – the Brook Trout.

Appendix 1

MET Financial Statement - July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015
State Administered Funds

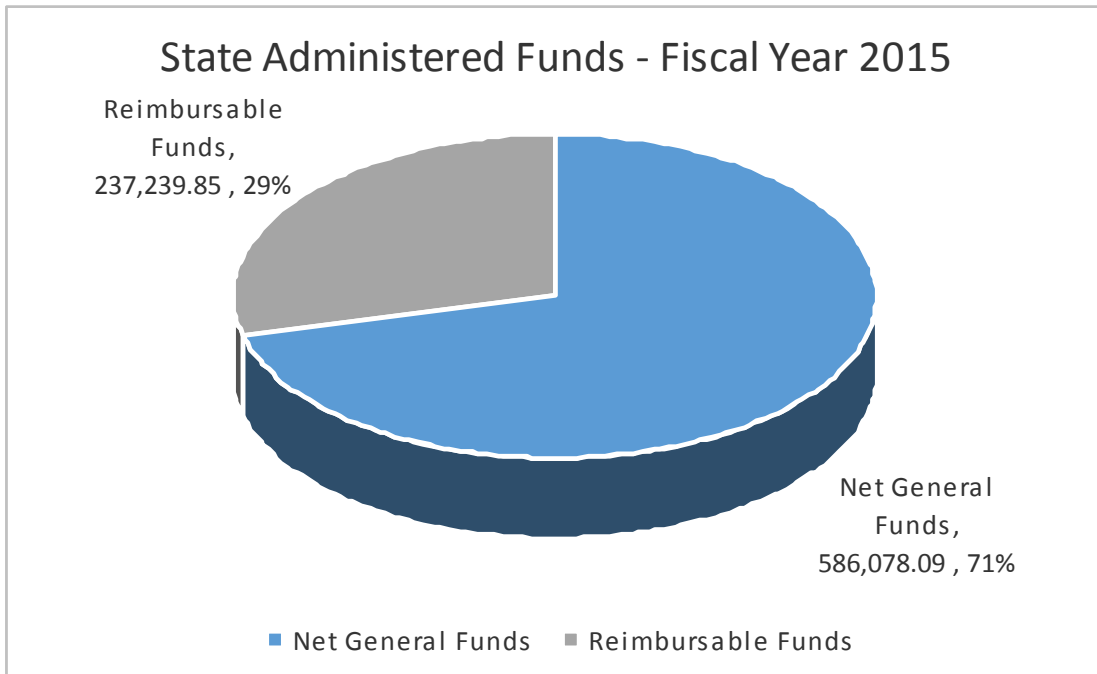
FISCAL YEAR 2015

Number of Authorized Positions	8
Number of Contractual Positions	2
Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits	636,058.43
Total Operating Expenses (including contractual services, communications, travel, equipment, supplies and materials)	187,259.51
Total Expenditure	823,317.94

FUND SOURCES

Net General Funds	586,078.09
Special Funds	0
Reimbursable Funds	237,239.85

TOTAL **\$823,317.94**



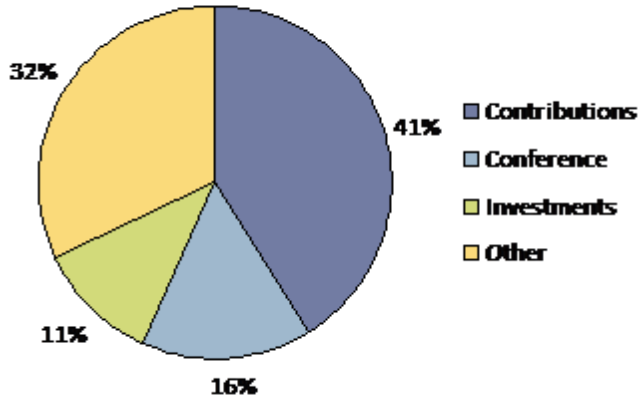
Appendix 2

MET Statement of Financial Activities - July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015
MET Administered Funds

SUPPORT AND REVENUES

Contributions & Grants	\$ 58,615
MLTA Conference	22,390
Investment Income, net	16,241
Other Revenues	45,787

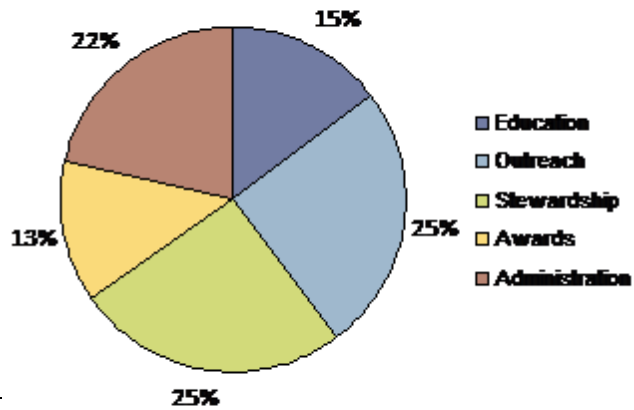
TOTAL REVENUES \$ 143,033



EXPENSES

LLT Education Program	\$ 24,906
Outreach Program	43,086
Stewardship Program	43,513
Awards & Grants	22,426
Administrative Expenses	36,683

TOTAL EXPENSES \$ 170,614



CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$ (27,581)

Appendix 3

Maryland Land Trusts and Land Conservation Organizations

CENTRAL REGION

Baltimore Green Space
Carroll County Land Trust
Caves Valley Land Trust
Charm City Land Trusts
Greater Ruxton Area Foundation
Greater Sandy Springs Green Space
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
Harford Land Trust
Land Preservation Trust
Long Green Land Trust
The Manor Conservancy
Mount Washington Preservation Trust
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County

EASTERN REGION

Cecil Land Trust
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Lower Shore Land Trust

SOUTHERN REGION

The Accokeek Foundation
American Chestnut Land Trust
Annapolis Conservancy Board
The Black Swamp Creek Land Trust
Conservancy for Charles County
The Conservancy of Broad Creek
Cove Point Natural Heritage
Crownsville Conservancy
Howard County Conservancy
The Kensington Land Trust
Magothy River Land Trust
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust
Rockburn Land Trust
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Southern Calvert Land Trust

WESTERN REGION

Allegheny Highlands Conservancy
Catoctin Land Trust
Potomac Conservancy
South Mountain Heritage Society
Sugarloaf Countryside Conservancy

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

American Farmland Trust
Biophilia Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Civil War Trust
The Conservation Fund
Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.
The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust
Improvement and Conservation
Maryland Alliance for Greenway
Maryland Historical Trust
The Nature Conservancy
Patuxent Conservation Corps
Trust for Public Land
The Valleys Planning Council
Wetlands America Trust – Ducks Unlimited

Appendix 4

CONTRIBUTORS

(July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015)

Conservation Champion \$10,000+

The estate of Alverta and Louisa Dillon
The estate of Sarah Griggs

Environmental Benefactor \$5,000-\$9,999

Gerret Copeland
The Helena Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
Ellis Parker
Jennifer Stanley

Open Space Guardian \$1,000-\$4,999

Abell Foundation, Inc
American Forest Foundation
Doris Blazek-White and Thacher W. White
Frank and Helen Bonsal
Brown Advisory
Chesapeake Conservancy, Inc.
Conservation Fund
James and Katie Constable
Wilson and Nancy Coudon
Louisa C. Duemling
Royce Hanson
Lorraine B. Healey
Hoffman Terryberry Gift Fund
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Stanislaw Maliszewski and Julia Jitkoff
Patricia V. Melville
The George Murnaghan Fund
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O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP
The Honorable S. Jay Plager
Riepe Family Foundation
Barry and Tod Salisbury
Valleys Planning Council, Inc.
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Julia J. Young

Habitat Hero \$500-\$999

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
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Mr. and Mrs. Edwin R. Fry
Tim and Julie Hussman
Insight Management Consulting
Maryland Historical Trust
S. H. Muller & Associates, LLC
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Mr. and Mrs. Leo J. Rocca
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Mrs. Barbara P. Webbert *in memory of*
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Charlotte D. Hawes

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Mr. Ward H. White
Lucy and Vernon H.C. Wright

Friend \$10-\$99

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Florence G. Klein*
Kristen Orff Maneval *in memory of Henry
V. Orff*
Ron Boyer/ Liz McDowell
Michael Nardolilli
Mr. R. E. Orff *in memory of Henry V. Orff*
Helene Perry
Dr. William Rienhoff III
Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Wentworth

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Helen Wilkes

Conservation Easement Donors

Shannon B. Bohrer and Susanne L. Bohrer
Civil War Preservation Trust
Cunningham Farms, LLC
Grande View Properties, LLC
Ivy Hill Properties, LLC (two easements)
Kilbys, Inc.
Michael J. & Jennifer M. Krueger
James E. Myers, Richard W. Myers and
James E. Daniell
Estate of Elizabeth F. Obenshain
REMCO Properties, LLC

Open Space Legacy Society

Dr. and Mrs. Gary P. Carver
Ms. Constance J. Lieder
The Honorable S. Jay Plager
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Schmaljohn





Protecting Land Forever

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